

California Roundtable Calls for Improved Environmental Information and Technology to Manage Climate Risk and Opportunity

Sausalito, Calif.—Lt. Governor John Garamendi, acknowledging the unprecedented environmental and economic challenges posed by an accelerating climate and energy crisis, called for leaders from the public, private and academic sectors to come together to support an “aggressive and robust state economic development initiative to establish California as the leader in providing Earth and environment-related information products, services and technologies.”

“If we are to better manage our response to climate change and transition to a new, green economy, that management and decision making must be based on the best environmental intelligence available,” he added.

Garamendi’s remarks were made today at a Roundtable at Cavallo Point that focused on leveraging California’s unique and unparalleled Earth observations, research, and modeling, and investment sectors. Chaired by Garamendi, the roundtable’s recommendations include:

- Establishing an “Environmental Intelligence Network” linking California’s premier computational capabilities to run climate models and optimize the use of global environmental data;
- Creating an “Environmental Intelligence Center” to provide critical information products in support of California’s green economy in the energy, agriculture, transportation and public health sectors.
- Establishing a state climate decision-support center as a national model for providing timely and accurate climate-related information for city, county, state and regional decision-makers in the public and private sectors;
- Developing a comprehensive system to produce the data needed to adequately assess the impact of policies aimed at reducing carbon emissions (e.g., cap-and-trade or carbon tax) and creating a green energy economy;
- Investing in a statewide higher-education initiative to develop degree programs that focus on or incorporate the application of environmental information for decision support;

The group also acknowledged the need to address comprehensive and sustained Earth observations, science, and the most advanced modeling as a critical element the state’s and nation’s overall response to climate change. They went on to identify several U.S.-focused recommendations, ranging from the establishment of a national program to measure and monitor carbon, to increasing the nation’s computational capacity to support advanced regional and local climate and weather modeling.

Roundtable member, Alexis Livanos, president, Northrop Grumman Space Technology, stated, “Although this is a time of great uncertainty, I am certain of this: Tackling climate change offers

a powerful opportunity to help us grow our economy, create jobs, strengthen our national security, and burnish the reputation of our nation.” He added, “The time to act is now and the place to start is here in California.”

California has long been at the forefront of climate change policy in the United States. In 2005, speaking at the United Nations World Environment Day conference in San Francisco, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger declared, “As of today, California is going to be the leader in the fight against global warming.” Since then, the state has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and the governor has set a goal of increasing California's renewable energy sources to 20 percent by 2010.

Recognizing the state-led efforts, the business sector, academia and nongovernment organizations have worked to make California the model for cooperation and commitment in mitigating climate change, and will play a critical role in meeting the emerging demand for environmental information and technology to manage climate risk and opportunity.

The California Roundtable on Improving Environmental Information and Technology to Manage Climate Risk and Opportunity was organized by the Alliance for Earth Observations, sponsored by the California Chamber of Commerce, and with financial support from Northrop Grumman Corporation, Raytheon, and Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC).